



**SEIUHealthcare®**  
United for Quality Care

March 6, 2023  
District 1199 New England  
Before the Government Administration  
and Elections Committee

*In Support of SB 1157: An Act Concerning Revisions to The Freedom of Information Act Concerning Employees of Public Agencies*

Good afternoon, Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. District 1199NE represents 26,000 healthcare workers in both the public and private sector in Connecticut. This includes approximately 6,500 state employees across numerous state departments including DMHAS, DOC, DDS, DSS, DCF, and DPH. We submit this testimony in support of SB 1157.

While we recognize the important purpose served by the FOIA process, 1199NE also believes transparency is critical in holding any process accountable. We know that there are nefarious organizations that would seek to utilize mass FOIA requests to obtain employees information, and it is these employees right to know who is requesting this information. Our members serve some of the most vulnerable populations in the state, they deserve to have advanced notice if requests have been made regarding them and their families personal information.

The FOIA process was intended to help to ensure an informed citizenry as well as to provide a check against corruption by holding the government accountable. However, under the current FOIA structure, anti-union organizations can use this process to obtain lists of workers' contact information, which they then use to harass them. This exact scenario happened to our members in 2021. The addresses of many of our members were acquired by anti-union organizations who then sent mail to our members in an effort to hurt the union and effectively suppress workers' collective power to fight for better wages and benefits.

The open and transparent operation of state agencies is essential to our democracy and at the foundation of the idea of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. However, that does not mean that the home addresses of our members

should be accessible through a FOIA request, especially without any form of notification. For their safety and security, as well as the safety and security of their families, co-workers, and patients and clients, we urge you to support SB 1157.

Thank you for your time.